Bullying in Schools

Article Critique

Lesley Taylor Swartz

Liberty University

Bullying in Schools

**Annotated Bibliography/Summary**

The awareness interventions of bullying are becoming more widespread in the schools; however, it remains to be a serious problem. Jacobsen and Bauman (2007) performed a case study on the interpretation of three types of bullying (physical, verbal, and relational) by school counselors. Relational bullying, which consists of social isolation, out casting, and rumor spreading, for example, was known to have the least amount of intervention or concern. The case study consisted of a survey questioning school counselors with various years of experience in grades K-12 within a school system of the Arizona Department of Education. The school counselors’ answers were compared in two groups, those with previous bully training and those without training and school counselors who are in schools with anti-bullying programs in place versus those with no anti-bullying programs.

The results were disturbing in regards to the attitude of relational bullying. Almost all of the school counselors considered physical and verbal to be the most serious, warranting some type of intervention, but did not perceive relational bullying to be that serious. The results did reveal; however, that counselors who had previous bully training found relational bullying to be more serious than those without training did. Jacobsen and Bauman (2007) indicated that these results were eye opening, since relational bullying can be very damaging to the psychological development of a child or adolescent.

The outcome of the survey lead the authors to believe that while there is more awareness of bullying in the school system, there needs to be more training and more effective intervention methods. The authors state that school counselors are in need of this type of training to understand the lasting impact that bullying has on children and adolescents.

**Critique**

This article was extremely informative for school counselors. The authors note that many schools are implementing a no tolerance program for violence and forms of bullying behavior; however, there continues to be many bullying situations that will go undetected without proper training. The authors describe relational bullying as being a covert form of bullying. Students can inflict emotional pain on others without any signs of bullying at all. The method in this instance is to single out individuals and isolate or alienate them socially by leaving them out of group activities, spreading rumors about them, or gossiping about them. This type of bullying can damage the self-image of children or adolescents that may last into adulthood.

The authors indicate that training is a necessity for school counselors to learn how to detect the signs of bullying, to learn proper ways in which to intervene, and to understand how this type of behavior can affect students.

Another point, which was made by the authors, was that many school counselors, teachers, and staff choose to ignore bullying when they actually see it, believing this is a normal part of growing up. According to the authors, ignoring even the minimal bullying behavior can send a message to the students that this behavior is actually acceptable and students will therefore not confide in an authority figure that this is happening. The authors made a suggestion that school counselors should incorporate lessons on the awareness and prevention of bullying. By discussing and acknowledging the problem openly, the students may feel more inclined to tell someone if they have been bullies and they may feel less hopelessness and more confidence in these situations.

**Reference**

Jacobsen, K. & Bauman, S. (2007, October). Bullying in Schools: School counselor’s responses to three types of bullying incidents. *Professional School Counseling*, 11(1), 1-9.